

to protect those things we hold dear. Quite often these volunteer departments are the only line of defense in these rural communities. It's time we provide them with the needed funds for proper training and equipment to better protect their communities.

I offer my sincere gratitude to our Nation's fire fighters who put their lives on the line every day to protect the property and safety of their neighbors. They too deserve a helping hand in their time of need.

I commend Senators DODD and DEWINE for introducing this important legislation, and urge all my colleagues who have not done so to sign onto this bill. I would like to encourage the Committee to hold hearings on S. 1941 and suggest that we continue to move this bill forward toward ultimate passage.

Thank you Mr. President, I yield the floor.

GUN VICTIMS OF TUESDAY, JUNE 20, 1999

Mr. LAUTENBERG. Mr. President, it has been more than a year since the Columbine tragedy, but still this Republican Congress refuses to act on sensible gun legislation.

Since Columbine, thousands of Americans have been killed by gunfire. Until we act, Democrats in the Senate will read some of the names of those who lost their lives to gun violence in the past year, and we will continue to do so every day that the Senate is in session.

These names come from a report prepared by the United States Conference of Mayors. The report includes data on firearm deaths from 100 U.S. cities between April 20, 1999 and March 20, 2000. The 100 cities covered range in size from Chicago, Illinois, which has a population of more than 2.7 million to Bedford Heights, Ohio, with a population of about 11,800.

But the list does not include gun deaths from some major cities like New York and Los Angeles.

The following are the names of some of the people who were killed by gunfire one year ago today—on June 20, 1999:

Ed Barron, 20, St. Louis, Missouri, Wayne Burton, 21, Baltimore, Maryland, Nigal H. Cox, 27, Houston, Texas, Jermaine Davis, 39, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, Myron Frenney, 22, Houston, Texas, Jose N. Garcia, 18, Chicago, Illinois, Agustin B. Gonzalez, 21, Houston, Texas, Fernando Gonzalez-Cenkeros, 35, Tulsa, Oklahoma, Jovel D. Gwinn, 22, Kansas City, Missouri, Roshon Hollinger, 5, Atlanta, Georgia, Antwaune Johnson, 29, Denver, Colorado, Edward Johnson, 36, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, Loris Larson, 35, St. Louis, Missouri, Robert Mirabela, 20, Chicago, Illinois, Frederick Rathers, 16, Memphis, Tennessee, Coartney Robinson, 20, Dallas, Texas, Arnold Webb, 30, Detroit, Michigan.

In the name of those who died, we will continue the fight to pass gun safety measures.

I yield the floor.

ARREST OF VLADIMIR GUSINSKY IN RUSSIA

Mr. LIEBERMAN. Mr. President, I rise today to express my deep concern about the recent arrest in Russia of Vladimir Gusinsky and its negative impact on press freedom and democracy under the leadership of President Putin.

Mr. Gusinsky runs Media Most, a major conglomerate of Russian media organizations, including NTV, Russia's only television network not under state control. Media Most is a relatively independent force in Russian news reporting, and its outlets have offered hard-hitting, often critical accounts of Russia's brutal campaign in Chechnya, as well as reports on alleged Government corruption. Besides being an important media and business executive, Mr. Gusinsky is also a leading figure in the Russian Jewish community, serving as President of the Russian Jewish Congress.

On May 11, just days after President Putin's inauguration, Russian federal agents in a major show of force raided several of Media Most's corporate offices, raising immediate concerns about the direction of press freedom in the new government. These concerns intensified on Tuesday June 13 when a Russian prosecutor called Mr. Gusinsky in for questioning, and then arrested him on suspicion of embezzling millions of dollars worth of federal property. On June 16, Mr. Gusinsky was released from prison after the prosecutor formally charged him with embezzlement.

It is very difficult for anyone to address fully the specifics of such charges, and the Russian government's case against Mr. Gusinsky, when so little information has been made available by the Russian government. However, the circumstances of the case raise serious concerns about the initial direction of press freedom and democracy under President Putin. As one of the opening acts of the new Administration, the government chose to carry out a heavy-handed, much publicized raid on an organization led by high profile Government critic. It chose to arrest the leader of an organization, Media Most, that is one of the few outlets of independent news about controversial Russian government policies. The fact that this arrest took place while President Putin was traveling abroad, and that he publicly speculated that the arrest might have been excessive, serves to make the situation and the Government's policy even more confusing and unsettling. Moreover, this case is not occurring in a vacuum. After President Putin's election, but

before his inauguration, there were disturbing signs of government hostility toward Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, evident in the harassment of RFE/RL correspondent Andrei Babitsky.

I am encouraged to see that prominent Russians have been speaking out about the arrest of Mr. Gusinsky, and that our Government is signaling its concern too. I echo the New York Times editorial on June 15 that this is "A Chilling Prosecution in Moscow." I would ask unanimous consent that this piece, as well as similar editorials from the June 15 editions of the Washington Post and the Wall Street Journal, be printed in full in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From The New York Times, June 15, 2000]

A CHILLING PROSECUTION IN MOSCOW

While President Vladimir Putin is traveling through Europe this week extolling the virtues of Russian democracy, his colleagues in the Kremlin have been acting like Stalinists. The arrest and detention of Vladimir Gusinsky, the owner of media properties that have carried critical coverage of the government, is an assault against the principle of a free press. Whatever the merits of the alleged embezzlement case against Mr. Gusinsky, there was no need to haul him off to prison, an action that cannot help but stir fear in a nation all too familiar with the arbitrary exercise of state power.

If the rule of law prevailed in Russia, and Mr. Gusinsky could count on a presumption of innocence, quick release on bail and a fair trial, his arrest might seem less ominous. But Russia lacks a fully independent judicial system, and the government still uses criminal prosecution as a political weapon. He is charged with embezzling at least \$10 million in federal property, apparently involving his purchase of a state-owned television station in St. Petersburg. He says the accusations are false.

There is a stench of political retaliation about this case. Mr. Gusinsky's company, Media-Most, owns numerous newspapers and magazines as well as Russia's only independent television network. Their coverage of the war in Chechnya has been aggressive and skeptical, and they have not been hesitant to investigate government corruption and other misconduct. Last month heavily armed federal agents raided the Media-Most office in Moscow, the first signal that the Kremlin might be trying to intimidate Mr. Gusinsky.

Mr. Putin seemed surprised by the arrest, calling it "a dubious present" when he arrived in Madrid on Tuesday. That offers little comfort to anyone concerned about Russia's fragile freedoms. If the arrest was meant to embarrass Mr. Putin while he is visiting Western Europe, it is disturbing evidence of palace intrigue and political instability in the Kremlin. If Mr. Putin received advance notification about the arrest and failed to order the use of less draconian tactics, he has done a disservice to the press freedoms he says he supports.

[From the Washington Post, June 15, 2000]

MR. PUTIN SHOWS HIS KGB FACE

The most recent defining act of Russia's new president, Vladimir Putin, is more Soviet than democratic. In an apparent effort

to intimidate the press, Mr. Putin has engaged in police-state tactics so crude that even his severest critics seem stunned. For those who wonder whether Mr. Putin's Russia will move toward joining civilized Europe, and whether it will nurture the legal protections that could attract investment and encourage prosperity, the latest news is ominous.

On Tuesday Mr. Putin's prosecutors summoned Russia's leading media tycoon, ostensibly simply to answer some questions about an ongoing case. When Vladimir Gusinsky appeared, without lawyers, the government threw him into the Moscow hellhole known as Butyrka Prison. He remains there, though he has not yet been formally charged with any crime.

The case has significance beyond the rights of any one person. Mr. Gusinsky heads a media company that owns the only Russian television network not under Kremlin control. The company also owns a radio station and publishes a daily newspaper and a weekly magazine (the last in partnership with Newsweek, which is owned by The Washington Post Co.). All of these properties have challenged official orthodoxy by reporting an official corruption and on Mr. Putin's savage war in Chechnya. The arrest will be seen, and no doubt was intended, as an attempt to silence President Putin's critics. "There is a pattern here, and we have seen it for some time," U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Strobe Talbott told *The Post* yesterday. "It has a look and feel to it that does not resonate rule of law. It resonates muscle; it resonates power; it resonates intimidation."

Some Russian officials have presented the arrest as a normal, even commendable, sign of Mr. Putin's determination to fight corruption and establish a "rule of law." Mr. Gusinsky is one of a band of Russian businessmen who became wealthy after the Soviet Union's dissolution in 1991 in part by exploiting close ties to those in power. Whether a plausible case can be made against Mr. Gusinsky or any of the other oligarchs is something we cannot judge. But that Mr. Putin's government should choose as its first target the only businessman who has dared challenge Mr. Putin (and by far not the wealthiest of the oligarchs) shows that this affair is not about the rule of law.

Mr. Putin's KGB background is widely known, but when he ascended to power, many analysts expected him to wield power with some subtlety. The audacity of the government's assault is almost as stunning as the assault itself. The arrest is a slap at President Clinton, who recently in Moscow urged Mr. Putin to respect freedom of the press and who chose to speak on Mr. Gusinsky's radio station. With how much spine will Mr. Clinton and other Western leaders who have been even more eager to embrace Mr. Putin, such as Britain's Tony Blair, now respond? Many Russians will be watching.

[From the Wall Street Journal, June 15, 2000]
PUTIN V. GUSINSKY

The arrest Tuesday of mogul Vladimir Gusinsky is either the first salvo in a Kremlin war against rent-seeking oligarchs or a return to the Soviet-era practice of taking political prisoners. It was either carried out with the knowledge of the Russian President, or (as he says) it was done behind his back while he is on a foreign trip. However you serve it, it doesn't look good.

Mr. Gusinsky may fit the stereotype of a Russian oligarch, but his arrest is significant because his Media-Most group includes Rus-

sia's only independent national television channel, NTV. While state television in Russia often has all the objectivity of a broadcast in Castro's Cuba. NTV is regarded as relatively objective in its news coverage. In commentary, however, NTV and other Media-Most holdings have been fiercely critical of the Kremlin, President Putin and the war in Chechnya, which remains his main policy achievement to date. For this reason, any campaign against Media-Most, wittingly or not, sends a chill throughout Russia's free press.

The allegations against Mr. Gusinsky are unclear. A statement said he is accused of embezzling \$10 million from the state, though no details were given. Even taking the explanation of embezzlement at face value, one is left with the question of just what is the Kremlin's agenda. After all, as the chief of the oligarchs and Gusinsky rival Boris Berezovsky noted, "There is no doubt that any person who did business in Russia over the last 10 years broke the law, directly or indirectly in part because of the contradictory nature of Russia law." Mr. Berezovsky may be thinking, there but for the grace of the Kremlin go I, but he has a point.

The lack of precise laws and enforcement and the ease with which insider contacts could be parlayed into millions has contributed to the moral turpitude and general disregard for law and fair play in much of the Russian establishment. Now even Boris Yeltsin's daughters are under investigation by Swiss authorities for allegedly running up large credit card bills at the expense of a Swiss company that was awarded lucrative Kremlin building contracts.

In Moscow yesterday, 17 prominent businessmen, including Mr. Berezovsky, wrote an open letter to the prosecutor general, saying Mr. Gusinsky's arrest threatens to destroy confidence in Russian as a place to do business. "Until yesterday we believed we live in a democratic country," they wrote. "Today we have serious doubts about that."

If Mr. Putin really want to tackle corruption, he may have to put the worst offenders in jail. But more important, he will have to overhaul the Russian legal system and its enforcement mechanisms and reduce the bureaucracy and regulation that give rise to so much graft and make government more transparent. Since most successful or powerful people in Russia have something to hide. It is not hard for the Kremlin to wield the "law" as a political weapon to badger its enemies. But that's not cracking down on corruption; that's just cracking down.

[From the Financial Times, June 15, 2000]
PUTIN'S PRESSURE

A move by Vladimir Putin, Russia's new president, to clip the wings of his country's formidable business barons was widely anticipated. If he is going to reassert the power of the state over the financial oligarchs who usurped much of its authority during the Kremlin rule of Boris Yeltsin, that is necessary. But the decision to arrest Vladimir Gusinsky, the media tycoon, raises a number of questions.

He is neither one of the most powerful nor one of the most notorious of that group. His real claim to fame is that his Media-Most group owns the television station NTV and *Sevodnya* newspaper among others—outspoken critics of Mr. Putin's government. In particular, they have questioned the conduct of the war in Chechnya. They have undoubtedly reflected the inclinations of their owner but they have also been healthily outspoken.

In so doing, they have been helping ensure that the press acts as a critic of government—an essential element in Russia's slow progress towards democracy.

Mr. Gusinsky now appears to be paying the price. Although his arrest is ostensibly on suspicion of fraud and the illegal acquisition of state property worth \$10m, the action follows a particularly heavy-handed raid by security police, armed to the teeth and wearing balaclava helmets, on his headquarters—all suggesting a deliberate campaign of intimidation. Other actions by Mr. Putin's administration indicate a similarly harsh attitude to any sign of media opposition. The TV station controlled by Yuri Luzhkov, Moscow's mayor, is having to fight in the courts to renew its license. The registration system for new publications has been greatly tightened.

The president does not appear to be a believer in glasnost, the openness introduced by Mikhail Gorbachev into the Russian media. More than any other reform, that probably guaranteed the end of Communist rule and the Soviet Union. By allowing exposure of the iniquities, incompetence and corruption of the previous regime, glasnost ensured there was no going back. By definition, however, glasnost was inimical to the old KGB security service—Mr. Putin's secretive former employer.

President Bill Clinton has already expressed his concern about signs of restrictions on press freedom in Russia. When Gerhard Schroeder, the German chancellor, meets Mr. Putin today, he should do the same, in strong terms. The Russian president has said he knew nothing of Mr. Gusinsky's arrest. He should have done, particularly in view of the widespread protests that followed. An unfettered press is an essential part of a market economy. He has a lot to learn.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

WEST VIRGINIA DAY

● Mr. ROCKEFELLER. Mr. President, today we celebrate West Virginia's 137th year as a state. West Virginia joined the Union in the midst of the Civil War when President Lincoln admitted it to the Union as the 35th state on June 20, 1863.

The spirit of pride and determination that gave the first West Virginians the courage to start anew can still be seen in the ever-innovative and evolving ways that West Virginians have adapted to changing economics and culture. This is apparent in the transitions of the coal and steel industries as well as in the increasing cultivation of the tourism industry. However, through the continual change, West Virginians have held a heritage that remains rich in song, craft, and tradition. It is as visible at the State Fair of West Virginia in Lewisburg, the Appalachian Heritage Festival in Shepherdstown, and the Tamarack Arts Center in Beckley as it is at Bob's Grocery in Lindsie. The state has an abundance of coal, steel, forests, rivers, and mountains, but her greatest resource has always been her people.

This natural charm of West Virginians is reflected in the scenic treasures that crown the state. Though born